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## House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, March 14, 2005, at 12:30 p.m.

## Senate

FRIDAY, MARCH 11, 2005

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Oh God, Who knows every one of our deepest desires, even our hurts are not hidden from You. We rejoice that we are Your children. Thank You for saving us from unseen traps and dangers. Help us to live so that we will inspire generations not yet born.

As Senators do the work of freedom today, may they labor with a sense of history. Give them the courage to make decisions that will strengthen our Nation for the storms ahead. Keep them from the pitfalls that nurture divisions and unite them in their efforts to find common ground.

Listen to our prayer and let Your light shine upon us. Shine on us, Lord, and we will be safe. We pray this in Your powerful Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

### RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The acting majority leader is recognized.

### SCHEDULE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this morning, we will be in a period of morning business to allow Senators to make statements. As announced by the majority leader last night, there will be no rollcall votes during today's session. Under the order, we will begin consideration of the budget resolution on Monday at 10 a.m. The chairman and ranking member expect amendments to be offered during Monday's session and, therefore, the next vote will occur at approximately 5:30 Monday evening.

I will reiterate what I said last night and remind my colleagues it will be a very busy week next week. The budget resolution will have 45 hours of debate remaining for its consideration. That will require late nights with many votes. I believe all Senators would like to avoid the vote-arama that often occurs prior to adoption of the budget resolution. In order to do so, we will need to keep a steady pace each day and evening next week and work together to finish the number of votes required to complete the bill. Next week is the last legislative week prior to the Easter break, so all Senators should plan to remain close to the Chamber so we can complete our work on time.

Let me reiterate what I said last evening with regard to next Friday. I know Members like to be ready to de-

part on Fridays normally, and particularly on Fridays before a recess, but this is budget week. Unless we have an extraordinary occurrence that I have not witnessed in recent years, we will be here through the day Friday and up into the evening Friday night. So I would say to all of our colleagues, be prepared for an unusual Friday a week from today in which we are here throughout the day voting, and well up into the evening voting, unless something truly extraordinary occurs that allows us to reach completion before that time.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized if he seeks recognition.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized.

### THE BUDGET RESOLUTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we have, in effect, agreed to use 5 hours of the time on the budget today. The real work on

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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it will start Monday at 10 o'clock in the morning. It is one of the rare instances in this body where we have a set time. That time is 50 hours. We are now down to 45 hours. It is also unique in that the time for voting does not count against the budget resolution. So there is a lot of work to do on this budget, and there will be a lot of amendments offered.

A couple of days ago I met with a group of ministers from a host of Protestant denominations. The reason they came to meet with me is they are extremely concerned about President Bush's budget. They shared with me their observations of it, and they based their presentation to me on a story from the Gospel of Luke in the New Testament.

In this story, there is a rich man and a poor man who lived in the same vicinity, and the poor man, Lazarus, was very poor. In life, the rich man lived a grand life and paid no attention to the poor man, or poor people generally, refusing to come to the poor man's aid when he should have. But in death, we are told in Scripture, it was Lazarus who went to Heaven and the rich man who did not.

Their purpose in sharing this story with me was to point out the immorality—that was their word: “immorality”—of turning a blind eye to economic injustice. And they wanted to make a larger point about the Bush 2006 budget, which, as they put it, has “much for the rich man and little for Lazarus.”

When you examine the Bush budget through a moral lens, as they were doing, you can clearly see the injustice and the lack of values in this budget.

The President is proposing that we make deep cuts in many programs that are important to working men and women, for those in real need. And why? To pay for large tax breaks for the very wealthy and to provide a variety of giveaways to special interests.

In his budget, the President is ignoring the lessons of the Gospel, the lessons there of the rich man. For example, the President's budget cuts health care for the most vulnerable citizens. The budget would cut Medicaid, which ensures that more than 50 million children, pregnant women, elderly, and people with disabilities have access to the medical services they need. At the same time, the budget maintains a slush fund with billions for HMOs. That is not right.

The President's budget also calls for cutting education. More than 48 education programs will be affected, with the cuts exceeding \$1 billion. So our children will suffer. At the same time, the budget calls for opening a precious wilderness area in Alaska for the oil and gas industry. That is not right.

The budget cuts benefits for veterans. The men and women who served our Nation with such bravery and courage over the decades, the people who have put their lives on the line on behalf of this Nation, are going to have

to pay more for their health care. At the same time, the administration wants to protect the drug industry by denying Medicare the right to bargain for lower prices. That is not right.

The budget cuts the COPS Program. It is an over 90-percent cut. That is the program that helps communities hire police officers to keep streets safer. So our men and women in uniform and the neighborhoods they serve will suffer. At the same time, the budget does little to close the special interest loopholes that are allowing big corporations to avoid paying taxes. That is not right.

The budget underfunds environmental protection. At the same time, it lets big polluters off the hook from paying the cost of cleanups. That is not right.

The budget fails to adequately fund the National Family Planning Program, which provides critical health care services to low-income women and helps reduce the number of unintended pregnancies. At the same time, it continues to support so-called health savings accounts, which are tax shelters for the wealthy that fail to meet the needs of those of modest means. That is not right.

America is a country that values everyone, the worker just as much as the CEO of the largest company in America. And most Americans would agree it is not right to cut health care for children and the elderly, cut education, cut benefits for veterans, cut law enforcement, while handing out a wide variety of giveaways to special interests and the powerful. That is not just bad policy, it is wrong, it is immoral.

Unfortunately, the budget resolution approved yesterday by the Budget Committee, with a few changes in the margins, is based largely on the President's deeply flawed budget. I think we can do better. I think we can create a budget that is as good for Lazarus as it is for the rich man.

Next week, we will take up the budget resolution, as I have indicated. We will work to make it better. But if the last couple weeks is an indication, there will be marching orders given to the majority, and they will march down here and vote against veterans, against children, against women, and against education generally.

So we will do our best. We will present these issues to the American people, and the American people will see what is happening in this country. The programs that are important to this country are being starved, starved at the expense of the American people. And the tax cuts go on.

Our goal is to turn this budget into a moral document for which we can all be proud, a document that truly reflects our Nation's priorities and the values of the American people.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I understand we are in morning business.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Kansas is recognized.

#### SERVICEMEMBERS CIVIL RELIEF ACT

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I rise today to share with the Senate a story that I truly hope is the exception to the rule. It begins last year, when a member of one of Kansas's local fire departments was called to active duty in Iraq. Certainly, that is no unique happening where today in every State people are called to service, whether they be in the service or National Guard. This gentleman, Mr. Steven Welter, and his wife have worked hard to make a good life for themselves and their three children. They live in the small community of Osawatimie, KS—it is a very fine community—where they are surrounded by friends and family. They recently purchased their first home.

Well, knowing that with Mr. Welter called to active duty they might face some real challenges meeting their mortgage payment, they contacted their mortgage provider to make them aware of their situation and to seek relief under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act.

Now, Congress has long recognized the burden that military duty places on soldiers' lives when they are called to active duty. During the Civil War, Congress placed a moratorium on civil actions that were brought against servicemembers. Today, through the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, Congress provides important rights and legal protections to lessen the burden on military servicemembers. A key component of that act, initially passed by Congress 40 years ago as the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act, is to provide the protection for servicemembers whose military service makes it difficult for them to meet financial obligations incurred prior to being called up for active duty. That seems pretty simple. It does not forgive debt. It does not relieve a servicemember of their obligation to meet their financial responsibilities.

Among other protections, the act shields a servicemember or their family from eviction or from losing their home. The Welters sought relief under the act, requesting that their mortgage company work with them to help them